

REPORT TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2007

**THE REEVALUATION OF THE BOUNDARIES
OF THE HILO BAY RECREATIONAL THRILL CRAFT ZONE**



SUBMITTED BY THE

**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE OF HAWAII**

IN RESPONSE TO

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 249, REGULAR SESSION OF 2006

DECEMBER 2006

THE REEVALUATION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE HILO BAY RECREATIONAL THRILL CRAFT ZONE

I. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared in response to House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 249, adopted during the Regular Session of 2006, and calls for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to reevaluate the existing boundaries of the Hilo Bay Recreational Thrill Craft Zone and to prepare a status report of its efforts at least 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2007.

II. EVALUATION OF THRILL CRAFT AREA BOUNDARIES

Although it was apparent in April, 2006 that the sampled Hilo Bay users seem to favor maintaining the status quo, DLNR's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) conducted a public meeting in Hilo on November 17, 2006 to allow any other interested parties which have not been sampled an opportunity to comment. The majority of the attendees at this meeting were thrillcraft owners and operators who reminded DOBOR representatives that a 2001 workshop in Hilo resulted in a plan that satisfied their needs and that the plan was supported by an array of bay users.

III. FUTURE/PLANNED RESPONSE

It is the recommendation of DOBOR that the plan to relocate and broaden the Personal Water Craft (PWC) zone in Hilo Bay formulated in the 2001 workshop be discussed in a formal public hearing and that the results of that public hearing be presented to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) for a ruling on the proposed expansion.

It is DOBOR's intent to invite groups to the public hearing which participated in the 2001 workshop as well as members of the scientific community to address questions raised in the November 17, 2006 meeting about the potential harm to sea turtles and other marine biota resulting from relocation and enlargement of the PWC zone in the Bay.

On December 8, 2006, the BLNR approved DOBOR's request for permission to conduct the requested public hearing. DOBOR has requested the DLNR Chairperson to appoint a hearing master and will move forward to schedule this public hearing as expeditiously as possible following the Governor's approval to conduct a public hearing.